

# Conservation Reserve Program



CRP is a voluntary program which offers financial incentives to private landowners to protect highly erodible and environmentally sensitive cropland by planting trees, grass, and other long-term cover.



photos: NRCS Oklahoma



## Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's single largest environmental improvement program and one of the most effective. The program encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to long-term vegetative cover such as introduced tame or native grasses, wildlife plantings, trees, filterstrips or riparian buffers.

For all CRP contracts offered, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides nearly all the technical assistance to determine the land eligibility, suitability of the practice, and predominant soil types for the eligible acreage offered. NRCS also develops a conservation plan of operation with the producer that is approved by the local natural resources district.

The USDA Farm Service Agency and the Commodity Credit Corporation administer CRP, and issue the rental payment checks. The Secretary of Agriculture announces any future CRP enrollments.

A general program signup for the CRP has not been held since the Spring of 2000. The CRP was reauthorized in the 2002 Farm Bill, with an additional three million acres added to the cap. A general signup is expected in 2003.

## Oklahoma CRP

Oklahoma currently has 8,583 CRP contracts covering slightly more than one million acres. Almost \$40 million is paid annually to CRP contract holders. Nationally, 33.7 million acres are enrolled.

The Conservation Reserve Program safeguards over one million cropland acres by reducing soil erosion and sedimentation in streams and lakes, protecting the state's ability to produce food and fiber, improving water quality, establishing wildlife habitat, and enhancing forest and wetland resources. Oklahomans receive annual rental

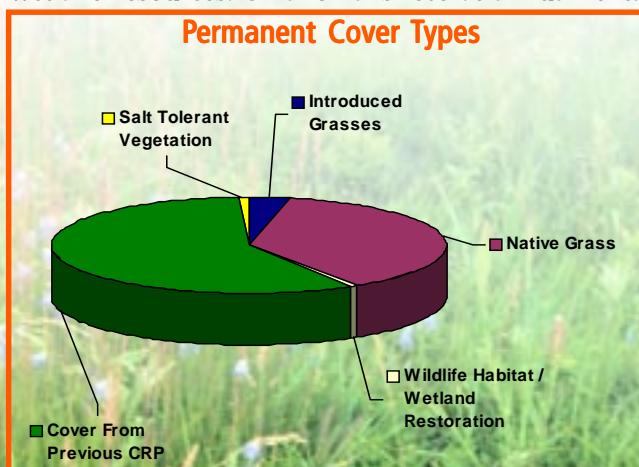


photo: USDA



payments for the term of the multi-year contract, 10 to 15 years. To establish the vegetative cover practices, a 50 percent cost-share is available.

CRP was first introduced in the 1985 Farm Bill and has been included in the 1990, 1996, and 2002 Farm Bills. Since 1997, only the most environmentally sensitive land, yielding the greatest environmental benefits, is accepted into the program.

### Continuous CRP

Since 1996, landowners have been able to sign up for certain high-priority conservation practices for the Continuous CRP any time during the year. These practices include filter strips, riparian buffers, shelter belts, field windbreaks, living snowfences, grassed waterways, shallow water areas for wildlife, salt-tolerant vegetation, cross wind traps strips, and wellhead protection areas.

This is an on-going enrollment. Landowners can enter land into this program anytime without national competition.

In Oklahoma, there were over 260 contracts on more than 11,900 acres through the Continuous CRP. The most popular acres were vegetation of saline sites (9,800 acres), riparian forest buffers (987 acres), and filter strips (766 acres).

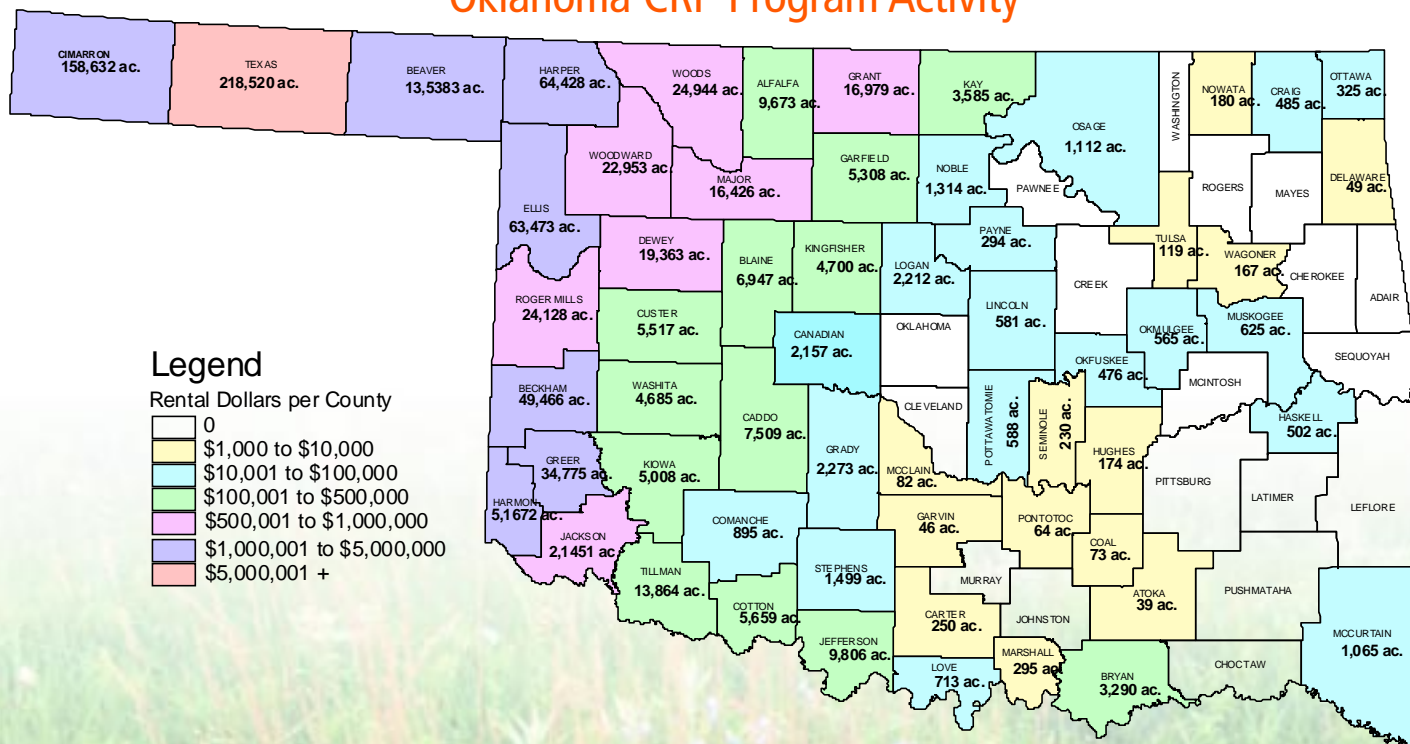
### Oklahoma Buffer Strip Incentives

NRCS also provides promotion support and technical assistance to the Oklahoma Buffer Strip Incentives, administered by the Oklahoma Tax Commission and the Oklahoma Conservation Commission. This program provides tax incentives to producers who install and maintain conservation buffers through USDA cost-share programs, including the Continuous Signup CRP.

### For More Information

For more information on this program or other USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs, contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office or USDA Service Center, or check out the website: [www.ok.usda.gov](http://www.ok.usda.gov).

## Oklahoma CRP Program Activity



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